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TERM II

EVALUATION

1975 - 1976

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INTRODUCTION

The Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts is entering its fourth year. During the last three years, numerous changes in reading programs, attitudes towards reading, and the training of reading personnel have taken place in Massachusetts Right to Read sites. This report is an assessment of those changes that took place in 1975-1976, the third year of the Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts.

It must first be made clear that Right to Read is not a reading program, for it does not represent a specific approach or method for teaching reading. Rather, it is concerned with those who teach or supervise a reading program. It is also concerned with educational organization and management, with the sharing of existing reading knowledge, and with gaining the support of an enlightened community so that they may assist a trained and enthusiastic professional staff.

As a result, Massachusetts Right to Read continues to emphasize specialized training and technical assistance to local educational agencies. The purpose is to show that more comprehensive programs in reading can be "built" rather than "bought." This concept applies to all levels of learning - from pre-school reading to adult reading programs.

Right to Read further recognizes that appropriate changes will not occur unless trained leadership exists to effect and maintain change. One of the major roles of the Massachusetts Right to Read

Effort is to train persons selected by the local education agency to be change agents. An assessment of this training program will be a major aspect of this evaluation.

The Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts is asking school and community representatives to cooperatively build a climate and process for change. This involves the designation of reading as a top priority, the appointment of a local Right to Read director to coordinate the effort, the establishment of a local advisory council, and the adoption of a criteria of excellence as descriptors of the quality reading program ultimately to be achieved.

The criteria of excellence as exemplified in the booklet, Focus on Excellence, are twenty-six statements of conditions that should exist if we are to eliminate reading failure in our schools. These 26 statements are organized under five major categories:

1. Community and school climate
2. Organizing and management of a reading program
3. Staffing a reading program
4. Selecting and utilizing materials
5. Fostering reading interests

From these criteria of excellence evolved the basis for a needs assessment instrument. This instrument serves as a basic guide to the assessment of a community's reading education needs. It is keyed to the twenty-six conditions and organized under five categories. Administration of this instrument to the local staff will determine strengths and weaknesses in a school system's reading program. Using a "Force Field Analysis," a hierarchy of needs can be listed in tabular form.

From these needs is developed a local plan of action. Priorities are decided upon, and strategies are developed; this evaluator will

be mainly concerned with the quality of training and technical assistance provided to local education agencies (LEAs) by the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort, with the effect of Right to Read on participating schools and communities, and with recommendations for consideration by the Massachusetts Right to Read Director regarding future program development.

It is with great interest and concern that the writer undertook the task of evaluating Massachusetts Right to Read, for he has witnessed for too many years what poor organization, improperly trained teachers, unsupported programs, and misguided effort can do to a fledgling reading improvement program. In the final analysis, the children are the ones who suffer. Good intentions and idealistic discussions, although helpful in clearing away the initial debris, are insufficient, and something more is required. That "something more" is objective assessment, expert technical advice, and planned, guided action.

This is what the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort professes to offer. This evaluation, then, will concern itself with the progress made by the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort to implement its claim.

BACKGROUND

In her study of reading in America, Jeanne Chall[1] cites the figure of 10-to-15% reading failures in grades above the first. Her figures are probably based upon standardized testing in this country over the last fifty years.

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1 Chall, Learning to Read: The Great Debate, 1967., p. 124.

It is possible that this figure is still seriously underestimated. The National Reading Council commissioned Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.to conduct a study.[1] Harris found, among other things, that 34% of the subjects sixteen years of age and over could not fill out an application for Medicaid because of reading deficiencies, and it would seem that demonstrating reading competency in this fashion is far more realistic than using reading testing criteria. So, the reading problem in America is more of a problem than was heretofore imagined.

Illiteracy, as far as the ability to demonstrate reading competency is concerned, perhaps affects almost one quarter of the population in America. (See the study Northcutt did for the Office of Education which confirms Harris' findings.) It was this problem that led James Allen to call for the Right to Read for all citizens, with the intention of eradicating illiteracy by 1980.

The problem became evident to a lesser degree at the local level when the results of the Massachusetts State Needs Assessment were published in 1975.[2] The reading section was administered to 17,600 nine and seventeen year olds in Massachusetts cities and towns. This instrument was designed to test whether students could:

Comprehend what is read

Analyze what is read

Use what is read

Reason logically from what is read

Make judgments concerning what is read

Results showed that the nine year olds in Massachusetts scored

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1 Harris, et al., "The Survival Literacy Study." Study No. 2036, Washington, D.C.: The National Reading Council, Sept., 1970.

2 Reading, 1974-1975, Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program, the State Department of Education.

higher as a group than any other comparable group in America. Although the seventeen year olds were at or above the national average, they did not compare favorably to the nine year olds. The indications are that performance decreases with school age.

Reasons for these findings are only speculative, but Massachusetts Right to Read feels that there is a plausible explanation; reading *per se* is not taught beyond the elementary grades in most schools, and as students progress in school, they are gradually forgetting or failing to build upon the skills they once had.

The Massachusetts Right to Read State Director worked closely with the State Bureau of Research and Development in reporting the reading assessment and disseminating the findings. The findings, among other things, suggest a relationship between administrative concern over the importance of reading objectives and student outcomes in reading performance. This in itself implies that differential performance on individual reading objectives may be significantly influenced by administrative policies established in schools. The importance of administrative support is a basic tenet of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort, (See Establishing the Administrator's Role in Right to Read, New England Consortium, February 1976),and will be covered in a more comprehensive way in both the Conclusion and the Recommendations section of this report.

The goals listed in the Massachusetts Plan of Action[1] are fourfold and recorded below:

1. To identify and train directors in Local Educational

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[1] Tremont, Massachusetts Plan of Action, September, 1974.

Agencies who will be pivotal people with the ability to initiate substantial changes quickly in a reading program.

2. To broaden the base of support and decision making in order to include members of the community outside the education establishment. A leitmotif of Right to Read is that reading programs devoid of community involvement and support can never be successful.
3. To create a means of measuring the needs of each school system in the state. The needs discovered by the Needs Assessment Instrument can then be ordered according to importance, and strategies for solving them through staff development can be conceived.
4. Formative and summative evaluation during the life of, and upon termination of, the three to five year local plan of action will be undertaken.

Each of these goals, and the actions necessary to ensure their implementation, will be closely studied and evaluated in this report. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the past record of Massachusetts Right to Read from this evaluative year.

Since background and history are presently affecting the future plans and actions of Massachusetts Right to Read, it would be wise to build on past experience and to closely heed and benefit from what heretofore has been learned.

WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS

The Massachusetts Right to Read Effort's training sessions focused directly on the preparation of Local School Directors and the dissemination of information related to needs assessments, plans of action, and establishing Right to Read in local school systems and communities.

Workshops in each of the six regions were conducted throughout 1975-1976. At the conclusion of each workshop, an assessment instrument was distributed for evaluation purposes. These were collected and tabulated and their results recorded.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

1. Item Reaction

The participants were asked to respond on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high) to each of nine statements related to the presentation and content of the session. Question ten asked for a yes or no regarding the need for more information on a given topic.
(See Appendix)

2. Comments

Participants listed strengths, weaknesses and general comments relating to the workshop just completed.

Results of these questionnaires are presented on the following pages.

Massachusetts Right to Read Regional Workshop Dates

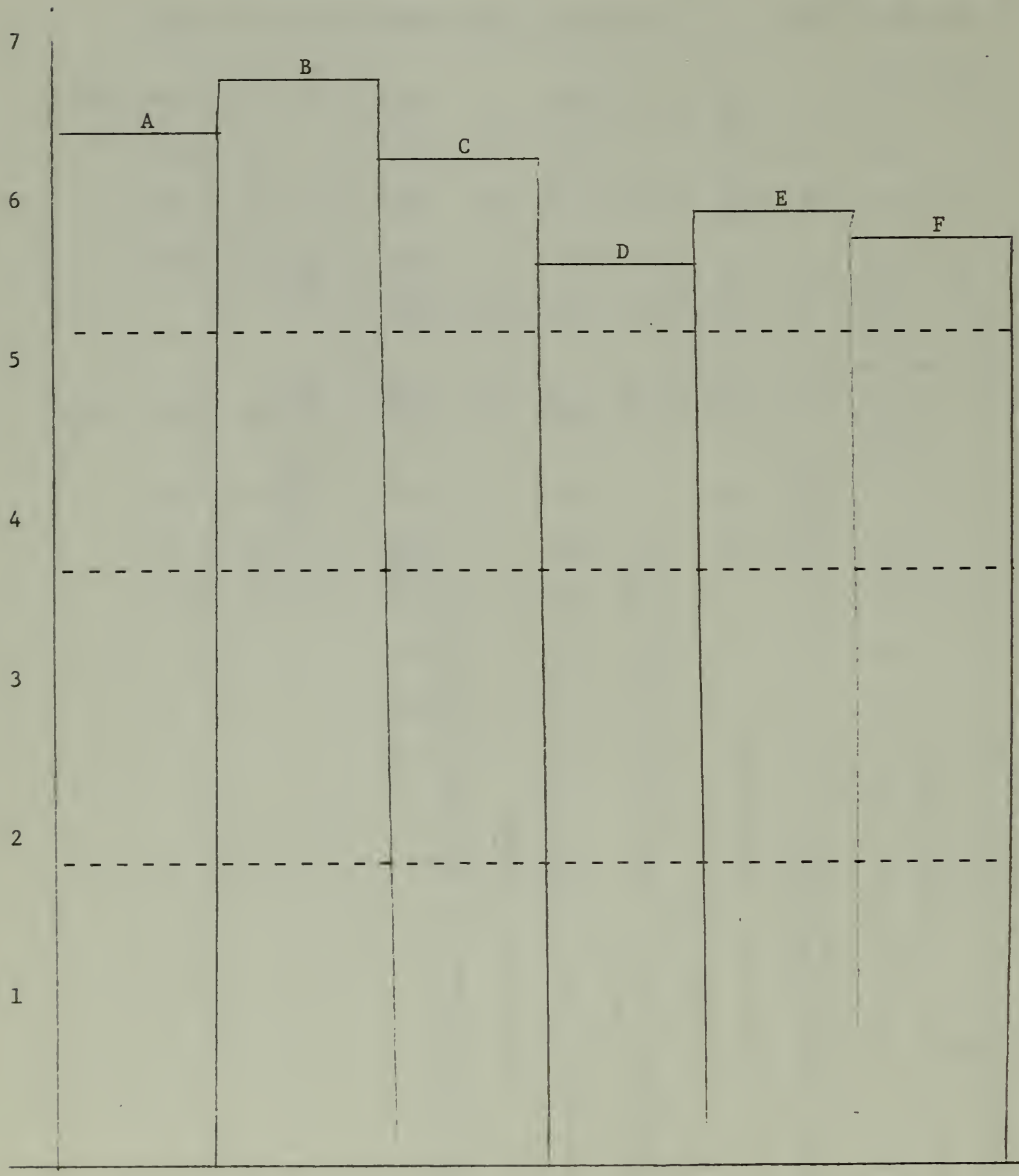
	Boston	Worcester	Pittsfield	Springfield	Northeast	Southeast
						Sep.17-18
1975	Sep.29	Oct. 2	Oct. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 7	Oct. 1
	Oct.19	Nov. 6	Nov. 20	Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 8
	Nov. 3	Nov.13	Dec. 6	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 29
	Dec.15	Dec.11	Dec. 11	Nov. 14	Nov. 8	Dec. 3
						Dec. 5
			Dec. 30	Dec. 4	Dec. 4	Dec. 6
						Nov. 12
1976	Feb.23	Feb. 5	Feb. 12	Jan. 14	Feb. 26	Feb. 3
						Feb. 11
	Mar.24	Feb.12	Feb. 26	Feb. 27	May 18	
	Apr. 8	Mar.23	Mar. 11	Mar. 24	Jun. 3	Apr. 7
	May 13	Apr.27	Mar. 25	Apr. 7		Apr. 28
			Apr. 8			May 5
			Apr. 11			May 26
			May 27			Jun. 2

52 Workshops (9/24/75 - 6/3/76) Regional Averages - Workshop Evaluations

Questions		A	B	C	D	E	F	Average
1. The organization of the workshop was:		6.3	6.5	6.2	5.6	6.2	6.1	6.1
2. The objectives of the workshop were:		6.3	6.2	6.4	5.8	6.4	6.2	6.2
3. The work of the consultant(s) was:		6.3	6.5	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.7	6.3
4. The workshop instructor made an effort to become actively involved with the participants:		7.0	6.9	6.7	5.8	6.5	6.9	6.3
5. The ideas and activites presented were:		6.5	6.6	6.3	5.5	6.2	6.3	6.2
6. The scope (coverage) was:		5.4	6.4	6.3	5.5	6.2	6.1	6.0
7. My discussions with the other workshop participants were usually beneficial:		6.5	6.2	6.4	5.9	6.1	6.5	6.3
8. My attendance at this workshop should prove:		6.7	6.4	6.3	6.0	6.1	6.6	6.3
9. Overall I consider this workshop:		6.5	6.4	6.2	5.5	6.2	6.6	6.2
10. Do you feel the need for additional information about the topic?	yes	27	27	12	34	71	26	26
	no	14	21	27	33	28	9	13

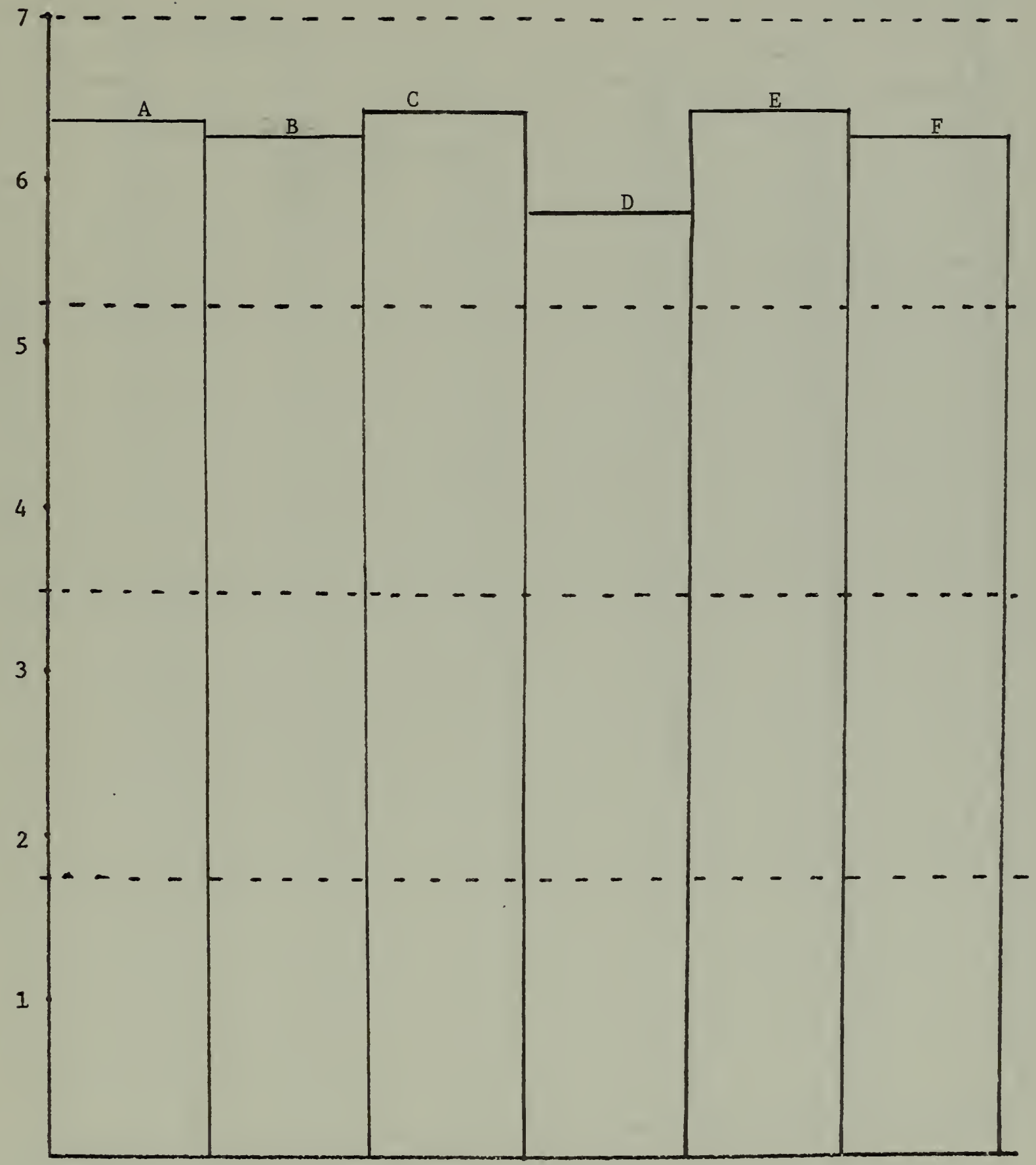
Scale: Low 1 - High 7

Graphs of individual statements 1-9 of the Evaluation Instrument for all regions. A, B, C, D, E, F, are code letters for the six regional educational centers in Massachusetts.



Question #1 The organization of the workshop was: (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (excellent)

#2



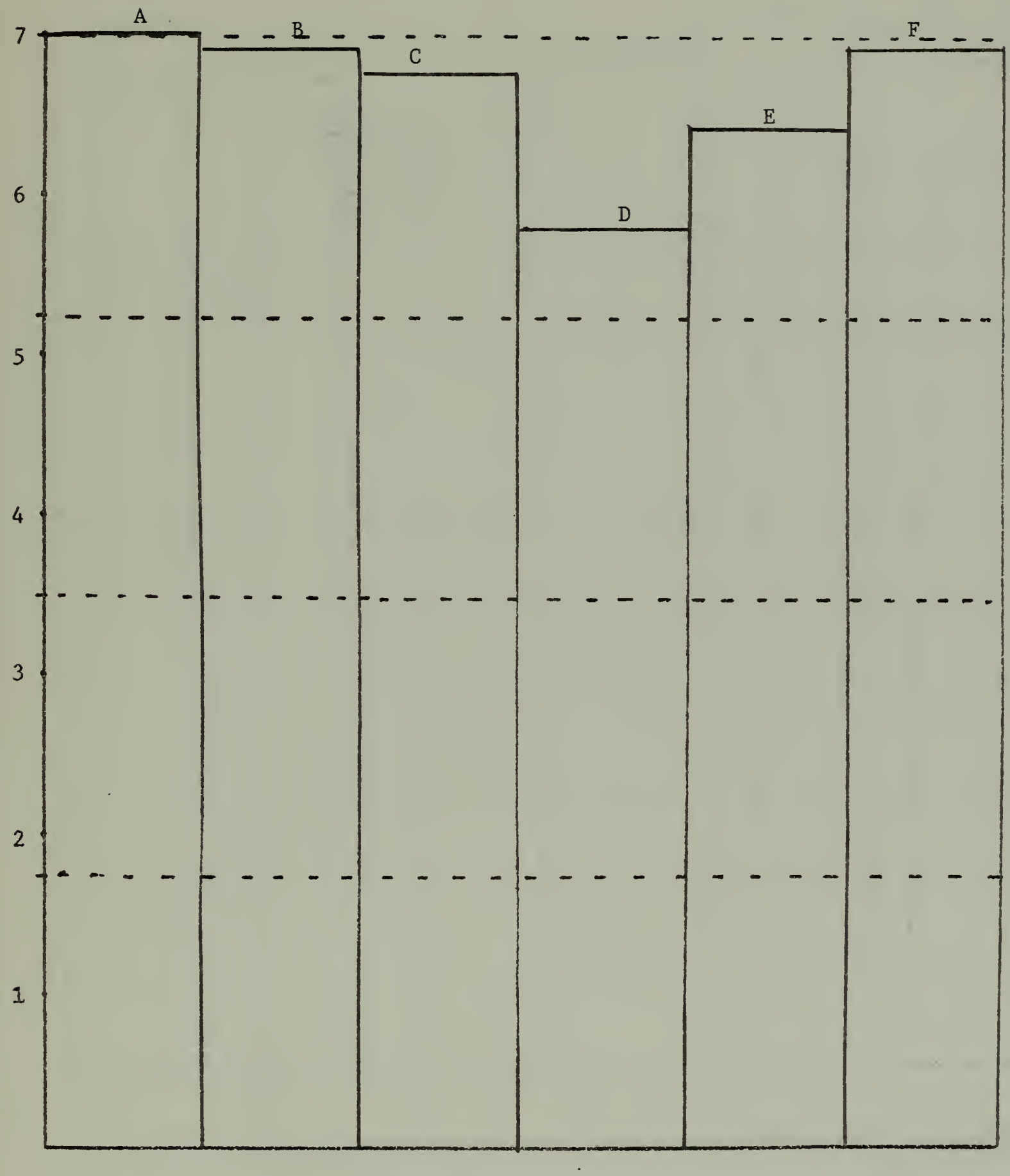
Question #2 The objectives of the workshop were:

(vague) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (clearly evident)

Question #3 The work of the consultants was:

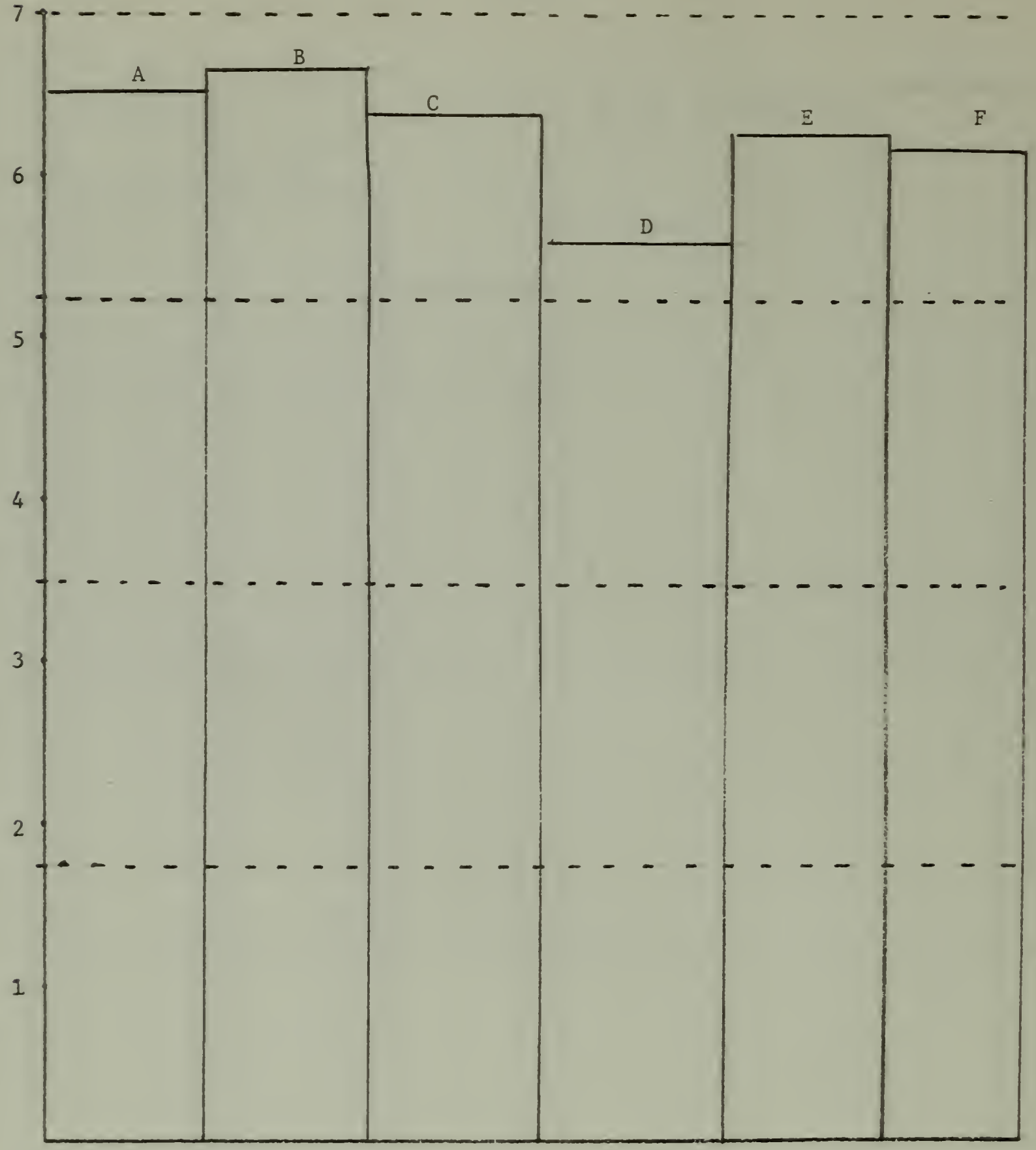
(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (excellent)

#4



Question #4 The workshop instructor made an effort to become actively involved with the participants.

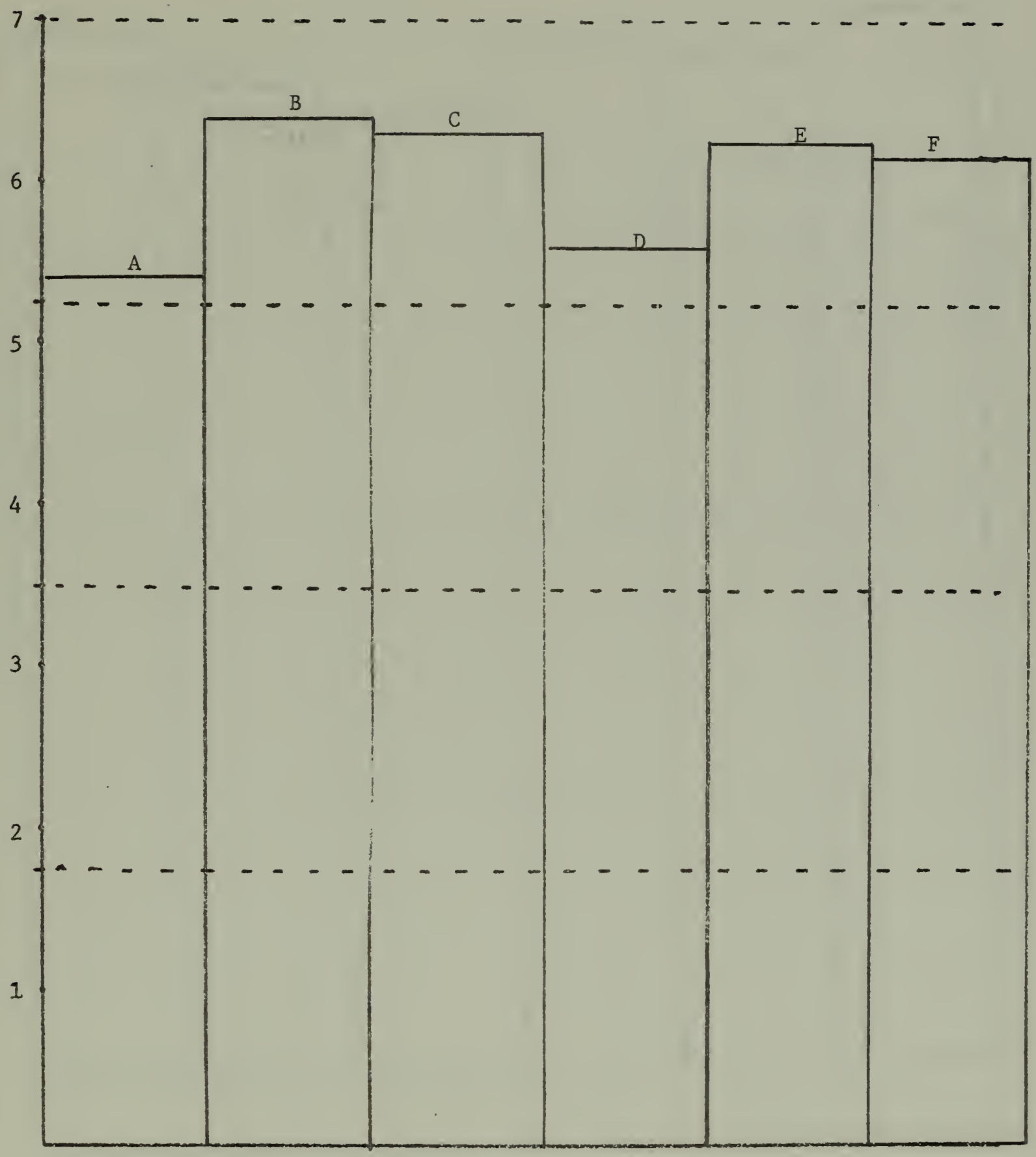
(no effort) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (considerable effort)



Question #5 The ideas and activities presented were:

(dull) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very interesting)

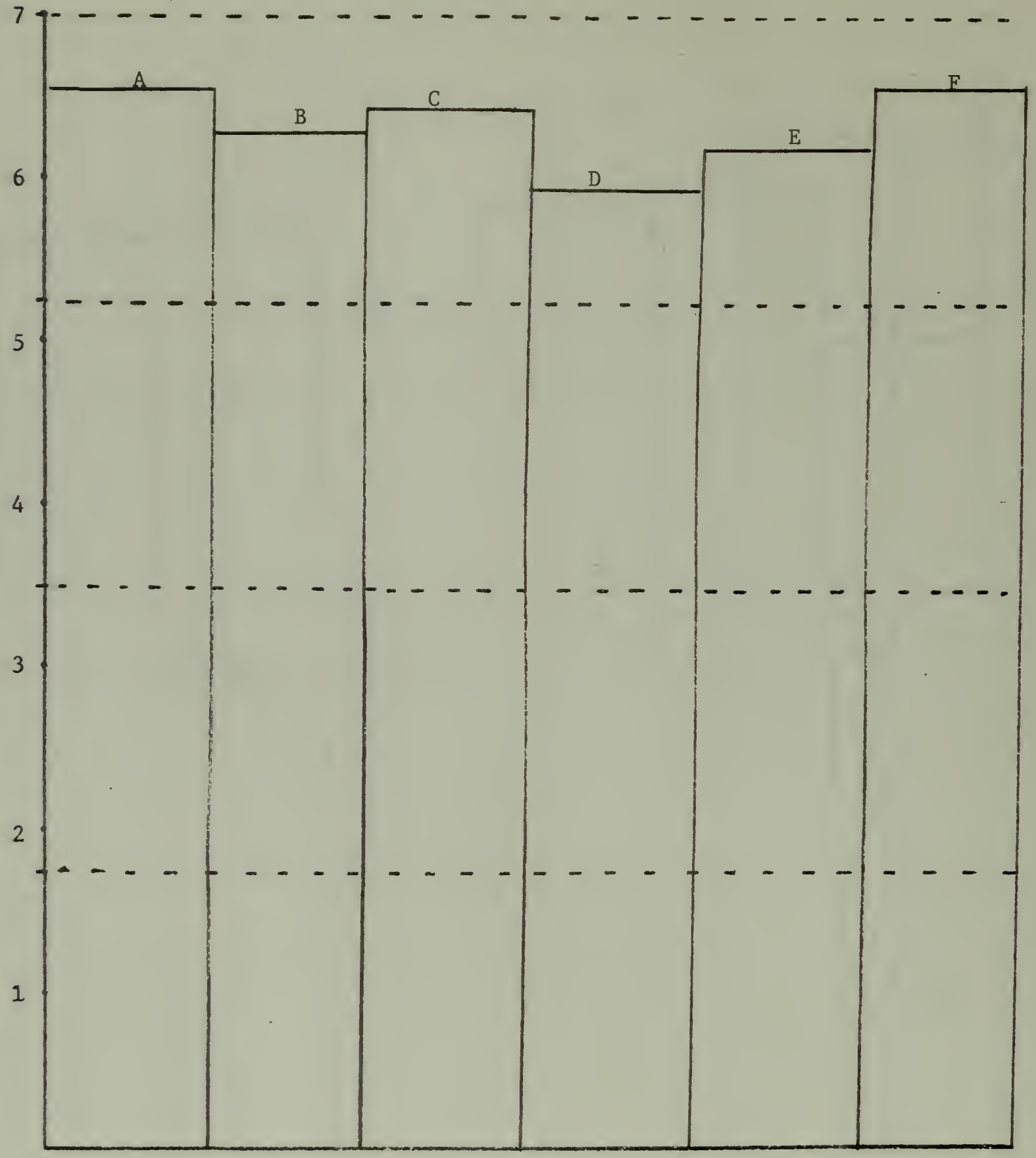
#6



Question #6 The scope (coverage) was:

(inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very adequate)

#7



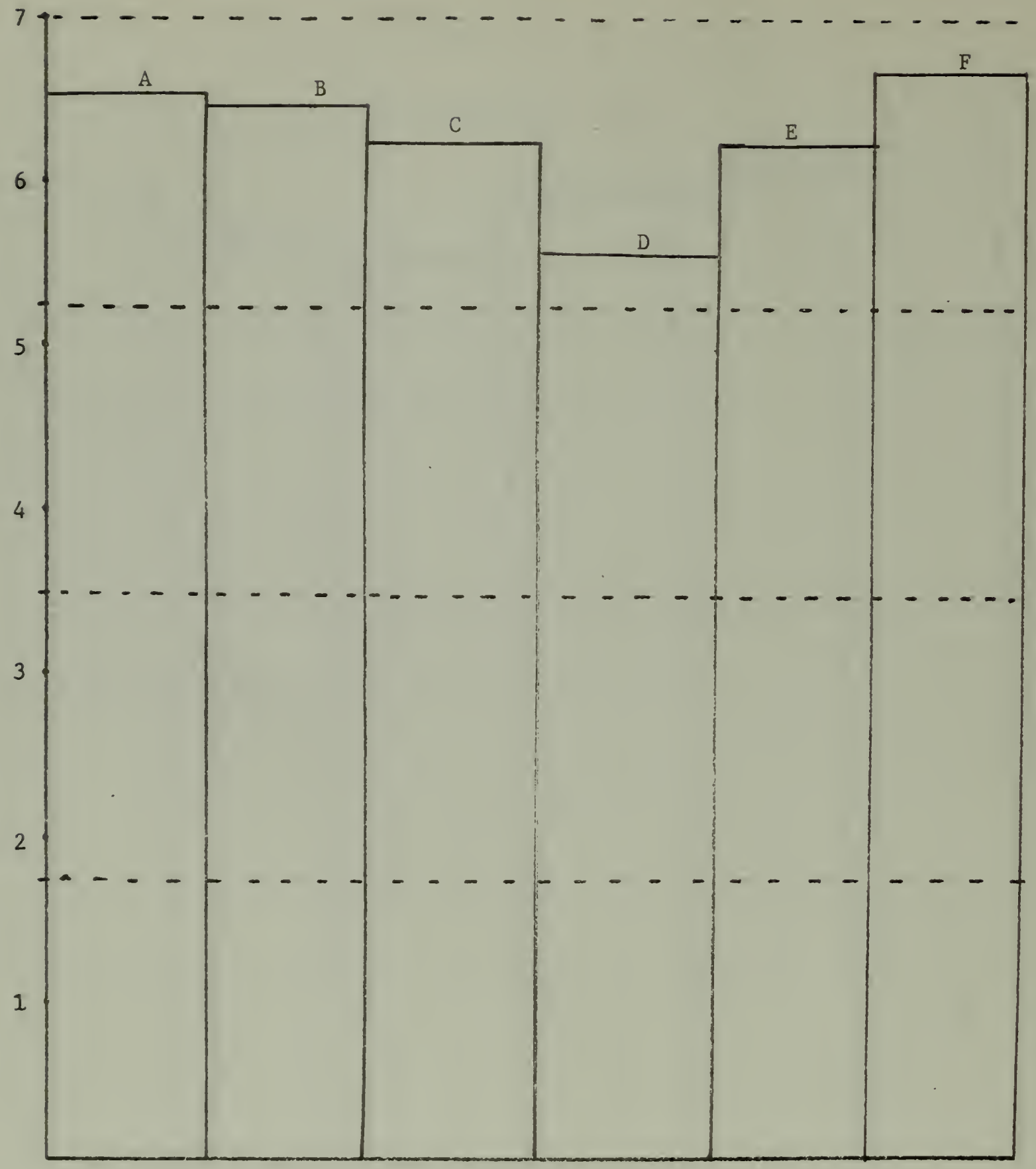
Question #7 My discussions with other workshop participants were usually beneficial.

(not beneficial) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very beneficial)

#8

Question #8 My attendance at this workshop should prove:

(not beneficial) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very beneficial)



Question #9 Overall, I consider this workshop:

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (excellent)

COMMENT SECTION

a). STRONG FEATURES

b). WEAK FEATURES

c). GENERAL COMMENTS

The comments listed here are not a complete list of all those submitted by the workshop participants. The list does not mean to imply that some were mentioned more frequently than others. It is merely a spectrum of comments from all workshops at each of the regional centers.

a). STRONG FEATURES

Centered on current efforts being made to improve reading instruction generally.

Key issues clearly raised and explored.

Workshop moved along well; good use of time.

The session cleared up complications pursuant to the method of attack for Right to Read.

The workshop was specifically planned and an excellent transfer of material and ideas was evident.

Answers from last meeting's questions were discussed. Good information gained.

Integration of many ideas and methods.

Personalities and feeling of support and forthcoming help when necessary.

Renewed my motivation to constantly improve my teaching skills.

Specific problems; flexibility sufficient for individual problem-shooting.

Material was offered that was much needed. Very well done.

Content - Work samples - Handouts "The Whole Thing."

Excellent speakers - very informative.

Use of several modalities for presentation (Force Field Analysis).

Number of sample items - literature to take back.

The expertise of the leaders; the reference works and bibliographies.

Good suggestions from those who had "been there."

The pool of potential resources when people come together is a strong feature.

The potential of a change agent.

The way you forced the group to get involved and start thinking about needs.

Having us participate in activities gives us an opportunity to express our own ideas as well as listen to the ideas of others. So, I believe, much of our learning comes from doing and today's activities involved all of us in "doing."

Starting on time.

Good speaker talking from experience.

Attempt to meet individual needs was evident.

Organization - Choice of Topics and speakers specific information.

Group participation.

Evaluation of needs assessment instrument for each item on the instrument.

Concrete forms for use with task force, to manage and keep track of stages of development.

In the sharing part it was very beneficial to help understand other communities' problems.

Materials were very good; leaders were very concerned with the needs of the participants.

Give and take between participants and consultant was great.

I appreciated the rapport within the group.

The chance to work through common problems was helpful.

Participants were open and helpful in suggesting solutions to one another's problems.

Roundtable discussion by workshop participants-enthusiasm & warmth of workshop leaders.

Workshop leaders seemed very concerned with individual school district problems.

The leaders had a definite goal and they set out to meet it systematically and efficiently and they did so effectively.

I became aware of a problem more acutely that will reflect in my thinking later.

Interaction was great.

b). WEAK FEATURES

Need experience as well as discussion, simulations, role playing. So much material coming from many directions led to some confusion of goal.

We got off the subject too much.

The session did not stick to the agenda which was sent to us.

We thought we were to have information on basal readers.

Theory and practice are often too far apart to be very useful.

Skills needed for group dynamics.

Not enough copies of materials.

Knowledge of use of A.V. material.

Morning sessions moved from area to area too rapidly.

Time limits too restrictive.

Should prefer to hear from ordinary local school systems and how they handled similar problems.

Too much talking at during first session.

Not enough time to really develop understanding of force field theory-this is not a criticism of Dr. Tremont or Dr. Savage, it is just a confusing concept for me; perhaps the hand outs will help clarify it.

Not convinced of relevance of these exercises to the task at hand.

Complex concept for such a short period of time.

Not enough time for small group interaction.

I feel we should be moving more swiftly on the implementation of Right to Read in our system - the leaders could be presenting more information to allow us to proceed more rapidly.

Clash and insecurity of TA.

Too much lecturing.

Lack of coordination between TAs in some basic information (Needs Assessment).

I would have liked a brief comparison of several criterion-referenced systems the cost factors analyzed.

Some repeat of information.

Tends to drift into the philosophical, away from the pragmatic.

Heavy emphasis on elementary.

Not all participants prepared.

C). GENERAL COMMENTS

It was advantageous to discuss and observe the status and progress of the Right to Read Effort in other Right to Read sites.

Tasks to be accomplished are many and I just hope we can get it all done in the time slots we have established.

Group review and participation in designing short range Plans of Action.

The only additional information would be continued sharing of information on Plan of Action.

Gripe session and suggestions for future should be very worthwhile.

Want step by step do process.

I am tired of commenting.

Get on with Change Agent skills.

Don't read handouts to us. Please set up a calendar so we don't have to discuss times and dates any more; objectives as well as time limits on all agenda items would be helpful.

I'm not strong on "play" activities.

Make this kind of program available earlier in the training session agenda so as to make it more useful and profitable.

Focus on practical information rather than theoretical.

Should it be possible for the local school systems from Massachusetts to get together for a 2 day workshop in order to share common experiences and problems indicating possible solutions?

Overall, I considered the day well-planned and worthwhile.

Got a lot of ideas for activities today.

I think Right to Read is exciting and will bring a great deal of benefit to our children.

I do not see the point in three page evaluations for each session.

LEA QUESTIONNAIRES

a. INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire was developed and distributed during July, 1976. It was mailed to the forty-five, third-year local school systems and received a thirty-five percent response. Its intent was threefold:

1). To allow the LEAs to respond to a questionnaire that was not prepared by the Right to Read SEA.

2). To measure aspects of the Right to Read Effort other than the regional workshops.

3). To reflect the attitudes of local school systems and the effects of Right to Read after a period of time since the initial involvement.

Each of the twelve statements in the first section of the form is presented in terms of percent of responses to each possible choice.

Answers and comments relating to the four questions in Part II are listed in total and discussed further in the "Recommendations" section.

b. ITEM ANALYSIS (%RESPONSE)

QUESTION

1). The objectives of the Right to Read Training Program, as I understand them, struck me as:

Easily attainable - 0%

Attainable -57%

Partly attainable -43%

Unattainable - 0%

2). The local Plan of Action is being designed to reflect:

Exactly - 29%

To some degree - 71%

Little - 0%

Not at all - 0% my school system's needs.

3). Training in the Regional Educational Center attempted to meet the immediate needs for the group:

Exactly - 29%

To some degree - 71%

Little - 0%

Not at all - 0%

4). Training in the Regional Educational Center was:

Not at all - 0%

Slightly - 14%

Sufficiently - 65%

Beautifully - 14%

Individualized to reflect the difference in kinds and comments of background of each local Right to Read Director.

5). My community appears to be:

Very receptive - 29%

Receptive - 57%

Somewhat receptive - 14%

Unreceptive - 0%

to the goals of the Right to Read Effort.

6). My colleagues in my school system appear to be:

Very receptive - 21%

Receptive - 50%

Somewhat receptive - 29%

Unreceptive - 0%

7). The administrators in my school system gave:

Top priority - 29%

Priority - 71%

Little priority - 0%

No priority - 0%

to Right to Read goals this year.

8). The materials and the publications developed by the State Right to Read office have been:

Very useful - 29%

Useful - 21%

Fairly Useful - 36%

Not useful - 14% to me.

9). There should be:

Much more - 29%

More - 50%

A little more - 7%

No more - 14%

Follow-up activities at the local school system when we move to the staff development phase of the program.

10). The on site needs assessment:

Greatly helped - 29%

Helped - 29%

Somewhat helped - 29%

Did not help - 14%

my school system to uncover areas of greatest need.

11). I believe that the effect of the Right to Read Effort will permeate my school system:

Shortly - 7%

Eventually - 79%

Not for some time - 14%

Never - 0%

12). Right to Read has made (a):

Highly measurable - 0%

Highly visible - 7%

Relatively visible - 79%

No - 14%

difference in the local school system reading program.

The following Comment Section includes all statements submitted by those responding to the questionnaire.

c. COMMENTS

1). Please comment in a very general way about the people that you "rubbed shoulders with" this year during the training in the Regional Educational Centers. Indicate how they helped you when you returned to your local school system to put some of the activities into action.

I met Directors with ideas and materials which were readily shared and made a couple of friends besides - who gave me ideas and support when I felt stymied.

Exchange of ideas, sharing of expertise, establishing contacts for in-service programs.

Excellent. Every one shared experiences, information and materials.

Other Right to Read directors were very resourceful and contributed many good ideas to one's own local situation and no two are alike.

They counseled, gave the benefit of their experiences and furnished their own materials to help us.

At first the training sessions were excellent and then as the money became scarce we were told that the people at the training center were wearing too many hats and I could feel a definite breakdown in training. What got accomplished in a day could have easily been done in 2 hours.

The staff at the Regional Center was extremely kind and helpful.

Specific ideas which seemed to fit the needs of teachers,

students, parents and administrators in our school department were gained from interaction with people in similar positions.

Support in terms of discussions of mutual problems in implementing the program.

Shared experiences provided support for local school systems solutions.

We shared many ideas on reading in general and specific programs that people felt were worthwhile.

Very efficient.

2). What, in your opinion are the basic strengths and weaknesses of the State Right to Read program as you experienced in your respective Regional Education Center?

Strengths: Sharing of ideas, getting us started, giving encouragement, listening to difficulties.

Weaknesses: Planning for maximum use of meeting times not always tops; some resource persons not fully used; communication haphazard.

Strengths: Good communication, objectives, leadership, enthusiasm.

Weaknesses: Money.

Strengths: A continual process and an elaborate program to help solve problems.

Weaknesses: Contact with local school systems and setting up programs with school committees. Release time and providing an all over-view sharing benefits of other communities of similar situations.

Strengths: Opportunity to meet with others in the program.

Weaknesses: Not geared (individualized) enough for the individuals participating. We preach individualizing instruction for pupils but still cling to lecture, single class instructional practice when teaching teachers.

Strengths: They did follow through by mail on our activities and, apparently, were well organized. They also provided us with experiences with other states and groups.

Weaknesses: We did feel, however, that they could have visited at least one of our training sessions.

Less money should be spent by the New England Consortium on elaborate conferences that run for 2 days. Most of the conferences could have been held for only one day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and still have covered the topics presented rather than running them from noon to noon - ex. Boxborough. They should also be more centrally located in Massachusetts - not always in the eastern part of the State. Less money should also be spent on publications and questionnaires plus postage involved. Saving money in these areas might allow money for Right to Read sites to bring in consultants to provide inservice training for teachers.

The greatest strength as I perceive it lies in making it possible for various professionals from several communities to meet with one another on a regular basis and share ideas. One weakness is lack of structure in some training sessions.

Strengths: Consultants were excellent.

Weaknesses: Lack of formal training guide - more direction needed.

Not providing enough for individual difference of communities.

Uncoordinated knowledge and strife between 2 leaders initially. One leader was excellent. The other confused workshop sessions.

Right to Read regional manager should have a reading background.

Program should be individualized and not group work.

3). What additions, deletions, or alterations would you recommend for future directions of the Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts? Fewer "released" days during school. No fancy hotels needed. Spend the money to provide on-site presence of Right to Read personnel. More individualizing of instruction. Bring in more outside resources - give a broader view of reading. Integrate reading and language arts; reading is an independent communication skill and isolated too often. Smaller workshop meetings would be helpful. Less paperwork. Provide more varied workshop presentations which local school members can choose to attend if they have need to. Local community staff development assistance instruments. We were all told to give the state's version of the Needs Assessment and my feeling is that each community should have written its own. Different needs assessment instrument.

4). Any further comments on any aspect of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort that you would like to record here would be appreciated.

The concept has generated enthusiasm because of its "home spun" approach. Do your thing, be creative, with guidelines. Not bad ideas!

We are a small community and we need all the help we can get and Massachusetts Right to Read Effort provided much needed assistance. They did a great job. For example, the curriculum workshop in Cambridge was one of the finest workshops. Our school increased its use of paperbacks. We wrote a federal program for a grant.

Where's the money for the local schools?

A more comprehensive-conclusive manual stating the whats, hows of <u>all</u> aspects of the Right to Read Program.

d. SUMMARY

Results of this questionnaire are generally favorable to the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort, although some weak areas were evident to the local school systems.

A majority of the respondents feel that the objectives of Right to Read are "attainable." Close to half feel they are only "partly attainable." Clearly the degree to which local schools find each objective to be attainable could bear further investigating. The issue is not covered here.

There is some doubt as to the efficacy of the design of the Plan of Action. Seventy-one percent feel it has taken their particular system under consideration only to some degree. This is explained further in the Comments section. Training in the regional center met the immediate needs of the group. The same % found that the Plan of Action and training sessions should be examined as to relevancy to systems involved, especially those with unique problems. It is encouraging to note that the respondents felt the training to be either "sufficiently" or "beautifully" (79%) individualized to reflect the backgrounds of the directors. Support for Right to Read is abundant. 86% of the local school systems state that communities are either receptive or very receptive to Right to Read. Colleagues in the school systems are also receptive, but to a lesser extent. (71%). Indications of vital administration support are most encouraging. Right to Read is apparently given priority or top priority in all school systems. (100%).

Materials and publications of Right to Read drew varied reactions. Half of those responding found the materials very useful or useful, but the greatest number only fairly useful. The materials and publications are presently being re-written and will be discussed in more detail in the "Recommendations" section.

Twenty-nine percent feel that there should be more follow-up at the local school system site during staff development. From the comments, we might infer that this refers mainly to on-site staff development and individualized program assessment for each community.

A majority of the respondents (58%) feels that the needs assessment "helped" or "greatly helped" uncover areas of greatest needs. The assessment was nonetheless mentioned often in the Comments section as being either too different or too general to use, or was emphasized too much during the sessions when areas of Right to Read should have been introduced or clarified.

A great majority feels that the effect of Right to Read will eventually permeate their school systems. None felt that this would never happen. The same number (79%) feel that Right to Read has made a relatively visible difference in the local school system's reading program.

Responses to the last two questions seem to reflect a positive, optimistic attitude of the local school system towards the State Right to Read program. It seems to this writer that

other results which are not as favorable stem from unrealistically high expectations of an organization with limited staff, incredibly limited funds, and a large geographical area of responsibility.

To date, the local school systems have been enthusiastic and anxious for more practical, specific aid for their systems. They have been impatient with some of the beginning sessions, materials and speakers, and hope that the follow-up activities will include more hands-on experiences with those who are presently involved in successful reading programs.

Right to Read has a reputation for success in Massachusetts, and new local school systems expect immediate, positive results from association with this program. Previous evaluations demonstrate that these results are forthcoming, if enough time is allowed.

5. CONCLUSION

Results of the workshop evaluations clearly indicate general satisfaction with, and attribute a high degree of organizational ability and technical skill to, the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort program and staff.

All of the responses to each item on the questionnaire were above the mean, and most scored on or near the highest possible level.

Additionally, certain inferences can be drawn from the list of participants' comments. A significant number of comments reflect the feeling that these workshops, although well presented and effective, would better score as introductions to programs encompassing more practical, hands-on experiences, program examples, step-by-step methods of program development, and careful follow-up.

A more thorough analysis of these comments and their implications, along with statements on the item response section, will be included in the Recommendations section of this report. It should be noted that the comments selected for inclusion here are representative of a number of similar opinions found throughout the questionnaire responses. They are not statements of any particular individual or region. Finally, the number of responses to question 10, Do you feel a need for additional information on this topic - Yes: 202, No: 132, may be interpreted in two ways: the greater number of "yes" responses may indicate a desire for more information on a topic that

was well presented and relevant to the respondents' particular needs. This would indicate a positive attitude towards the workshop topics and a wish to pursue a given topic further.

Alternatively, the "yes" response may indicate a lack of clarity or depth in the presentation, or prior dissatisfaction with the speaker's method, or even his point of view.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort are based upon information gathered from previously reported workshop evaluations, questionnaires, Right to Read publications and reports, and direct observations and discussions. Recommendations are listed randomly and are not in order of importance or significance.

1. Massachusetts Right to Read should devote more effort toward the improvement of reading instruction in the secondary schools, and should include more secondary school teachers and reading personnel in workshops and training sessions as both participants and technical advisors.

2. Reading in the content areas (e.g., English, social studies, science, math should be a priority at all levels, and subject area teachers should be included in Right to Read activities, to encourage better coordination of effort between reading specialists and subject area teachers.

3. The Needs Assessment Instrument should be examined and rewritten. Areas that are too vague, too general, and too difficult to implement should be changed to measure the specific needs of individual communities. Too much time is being spent on Needs Assessment during training sessions and not enough on the activities derived from the results of such an assessment.

4. The role of the technical advisors should be altered to include a "pool" of reading experts on specific needs and skills who would contract with the regional managers for various sessions as needed. The repeated use of the same technical advisors is not advantageous to Right to Read.

5. Workshops should be better organized. Maximum use of time, space, participants and information is essential in introductory sessions. The use of agendas and outlines is suggested as a means to enhance efficient management. Also, less "lecture" and more active participation and individual counseling are recommended.

6. Right to Read should plan to initiate a series of follow-up activities which are clearly related to the ideas and guidelines presented in previous workshops. These follow-up sessions should take place in the individual Right to Read school systems and should include plans for staff development.

7. More effort should be made to coordinate the various language arts or communication skills, such as writing, speaking, listening and basic English usage, under the direction of Right to Read, with input from other educational agencies. This recommendation is based upon the results of the Massachusetts Assessment.

8. The Massachusetts Right to Read State Advisory Council should have a more direct and responsible role in the direction of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort and in improving reading in the Commonwealth in general. It is recommended that the Massachusetts Right to Read Director provide for the continuation of the Council and the expansion of its role.

9. Current exemplary reading programs and their directors should be matched with new LEAs that are having similar problems. The latter then could benefit from the practical experience of visiting and observing a successfully managed reading program. Specific "how to" questions are seemingly not being answered at regional sessions and such "partnerships" may help to solve this particular problem.

10. Similarly, classroom teachers and supervisors who have proved

their expertise in developing and managing reading programs should be used in LEA training sessions. Moreover, the use of local Right to Read directors is recommended as another source to use to upgrade the regional training program.

11. Comments from one of the Regional Centers indicate a lack of coordination and a visible amount of confusion and strife among some of the technical advisors during presentations. For that center, and for centers that may possibly encounter such a problem in the future, it is recommended that an immediate re-evaluation of the effectiveness of such personnel by the State Director, followed by immediate appropriate remedial action be taken.

12. Right to Read is presently, gearing a part of its workshops and publications towards the inclusion of administrators in the Right to Read Effort. Effective change is possible only with the complete and apparent support of school administrators and central office personnel. This is evident in the questionnaire responses and should be further encouraged and implemented by Massachusetts Right to Read.

13. Massachusetts Right to Read would benefit from more and even better public relations. Information explaining Right to Read activities should be regularly sent to both local and central media centers and reports made on activities and progress of participating communities. Special reports on various aspects of Right to Read should be prepared for television, radio and the press.

14. An all-inclusive, explanatory, comprehensive, and step-by-step "how to" manual should be written and included in the materials presented to LEAs. Present Right to Read publications are viewed by some LEAs as too philosophical, ideological, repetitive and impractical. LEAs are in need of specific guidelines for present action that

can be easily understood, followed, implemented and evaluated. A practical manual, written with input from LEAs and related to the goals and phases of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort would be a great aid for future local Right to Read directors.

15. Finally, it is recommended that all reading and language arts organizations in Massachusetts and other professional groups make a concentrated attempt to coordinate their efforts and pool their resources in order to reach the goal of eradicating illiteracy in Massachusetts. There is no longer time or reason for competition or fragmented efforts. There is only time for cooperation, sharing of knowledge and genuine concern. Massachusetts Right to Read can and should lead the way towards this lofty goal.

APPENDIX

A-1 Right to Read Agreement

A-2 Workshop Evaluation Sheet

A-3 Preliminary Questionnaire...

A-4 Summer Mailout Questionnaire, 1976

THE MASSACHUSETTS
RIGHT TO READ EFFORT

State Director: Dr. Joseph J. Tremont
Committee Member: Dr. Natalie Norton

State Department of Education
182 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111
Telephone: (617) 542-7349

A G R E E M E N T

The board of education of the Local Education Agency known as the _____ hereby agrees to those conditions enumerated below relative to participation in the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort.

1. Acceptance of the services to be provided to the Local Education Agency through the Right to Read Effort.

   Such services shall include:
   a. the preparation of a LEA director(s) through an instructional program involving a minimum of thirty, half days throughout the year
   b. direct assistance to the LEA through the SEA, the Regional Centers, and the LEA director(s) in evaluating the current reading program and in recommending changes throughout the year
   c. direct assistance during the period of program implementation and refinement.

2. Adopt a formal resolution affirming reading as a priority in the local education agency.

3. Authorize the establishment of a LEA Right to Read Advisory Council and an In-House Task Force, with a recognition of the role that each of these two groups can play in the education process.

4. Designate an individual(s) as the director(s) of the LEA with the support necessary to execute the responsibilities inherent in such a designation.

5. Release the LEA director(s) to attend all training sessions conducted in one of the six Regional Centers.

6. Complete a progress report on objectives accomplished during each phase of the program.

7. Give consideration to all reasonable requests on matters relating to the Right to Read Effort.

8. Recognize that remaining in the Right to Read Effort is dependent upon federal funding of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort, as well as the completion of the Right to Read goals as contained in the training program.

_____ _____
Date Chairperson, LEA Board of Education

_____
Chief Administrative Officer of the LEA

Regional Center: _____

Date: _____

Workshop Evaluation Sheet

Instructions:

To determine whether or not the workshop met your needs and our objectives, we would like for you to give us your honest opinion on the design, presentation, and value of this workshop. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST EXPRESSES YOUR REACTION TO EACH OF THE ITEMS BELOW.

EVALUATION ITEMS

			MEDIANS					
1.	The organization of the workshop was:	Excellent 7	6	5	4	3	2	Poor 1
2.	The objectives of the workshop were:	Clearly Evident 7	6	5	4	3	2	Vague 1
3.	The work of the consultant(s) were:	Excellent 7	6	5	4	3	2	Poor 1
4.	The workshop instructor made an effort to become actively involved with the participants.	Considerable Effort 7	6	5	4	3	2	No Effor 1
5.	The ideas and activities presented were:	Very Interesting 7	6	5	4	3	2	Dull 1

			MEDIANS					
6.	The scope (coverage) was:	Very Adequate						Inadequate
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7.	My discussions with other workshop participants were usually beneficial.	Very Beneficial					Not	Beneficial
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8.	My attendance at this workshop should prove:	Very Beneficial					Not	Beneficial
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Overall, I consider this workshop:	Excellent						Poor
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Do you feel a need for additional information about the topic? (check one)	Yes						No

COMMENTS FROM R_2R SESSION: Date:_____

STRONG FEATURES:

WEAK FEATURES:

INDIVIDUAL GENERAL COMMENTS:

SPECIAL SPEAKERS:

LEA Site_____

Regional Center_____

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS RIGHT TO READ EFFORT: 1975-1976

I. PROFILE OF THE LEA READING PROGRAM

1. Describe the reading program in your school system at each of the following levels:

   Elementary_____

   _____

   Middle/Junior High_____

   _____

   High School_____

   _____

2. List the three most crucial concerns you feel are present in your school system's reading program at each of the following levels:

   Elementary_____

   _____

   _____

   Middle/Junior High_____

   _____

   _____

   High School_____

   _____

   _____

3. Within the last five years has your school system conducted a needs assessment in reading?

   Yes____ No____

If YES, please note the year, type of assessment instrument used (i.e., questionnaire, rating scale, etc.), and briefly describe what has occurred as a result of this assessment.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. List existing Federal and State funded reading programs in your school system:

_____

_____

_____

5. List in-service reading workshops planned in your school system for the 1975-76 school year:

Type: _____

Grade levels involved: _____

Type: _____

Grade levels involved: _____

Type: _____

Grade levels involved: _____

6. If you have any existing teacher committees in your school systems which provide input into the reading program list below:

_____

_____

7. List any available special reading services or centers in your school system:

_____

_____

_____

II. PROFILE OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEA READING PROGRAM

1. Does your school system involve parents and/or interested community members in the reading program?

Yes____ No____

If YES, briefly describe the role of the committee(s) existing in your school system:

Name_____

Role_____

_____

_____

Name_____

Role_____

_____

_____

2. Does your school system use volunteers in your reading program?

Yes____ No____

If YES, At what grade levels_____

How are the volunteers trained_____

_____

_____

How are the volunteers used (i.e. instructional aides, clerical, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

III. GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING LEA PARTICIPATION IN THE MASSACHUSETTS RIGHT TO READ EFFORT

. Generally, what do you know about the Right to Read Effort?

. How do you feel about your personal involvement in the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort?

. Did you attend the Massachusetts Right to Read Conference last April, 1975?

Yes____ No____

. What do you anticipate some of the content of the training sessions at the Regional Center will be?

. What new and different skills do you think you will acquire as a result of these training sessions?

6. What changes do you feel you might be able to bring about in your school system's reading program as a result of your participation in the Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts?

7. Considering the position you already have in your school system, approximately how much time do you anticipate your administration will allow you to spend on Right to Read activities this year?

8. Briefly describe your impressions of the following:

   a. Needs assessment

   b. Staff involvement in planning reading programs

   c. Staff development reading in the content areas

d. Community involvement in school reading programs

e. Program evaluation

Additional comments:

Part I. Please underline the word(s) completing each statement in the sense most appropriate to your experience with Right to Read.

1. The objectives of the Right to Read training program, as I understood them, struck me as easily attainable / attainable / in part attainable / unattainable.

2. The local Plan of Action is being designed to reflect exactly / to some degree / little / not at all my school system's needs.

3. Training in the Regional Education Center attempted to meet the immediate needs for the group exactly / to some degree/ little / not at all.

4. Training in the Regional Education Center was not at all / slightly / sufficiently / beautifully individualized to reflect the differences in kinds and ammounts of background of each local R2R director.

5. My community appears to be very receptive / receptive / somewhat receptive / unreceptive to the goals of the Right to Read Effort.

6. My colleagues in my school system appear to be very receptive / receptive / fairly receptive / unreceptive to the goals of the Right to Read Effort.

7. The administration in my school system gave top priority / priority / little priority / no priority to the Right to Read goals this year.

8. The materials and the publications developed by the State Right to Read office have been very useful / useful / fairly useful/ not useful to me.

9. There should be much more / more / a little more / no more follow up activities at the Local Educational Agency when we move to the Staff Development phase of the program.

10. The on-site needs assessment greatly helped / helped / somewhat helped / did not help my school system to uncover areas of greatest need.

11. Ibelieve that the effect of the Right to Read Effort will permeate my school system shortly / eventually / not for some time / never.

12. Right to Read has made a highly measurable / highly visible / relatively visible / no difference in the LEA reading program.

Part II. Please answer as fully as possible.

1. Please comment in a very general way about the people that you rubbed shoulders with this year during the training in the Regional Educational Centers. Indicate how they helped you when you returned to your LEA to put some of the activities into action.

2. What, in your opinion, are the basic strengths and weaknesses of the State R2R program as you experienced it in your respective Regional Education Center?

3. What additions, deletions, or alterations would you recommend for future directions of the Right to Read Effort in Massachusetts?

4. Any further comments on any aspect of the Massachusetts R2R Effort that you would like to record here would be appreciated.